

NSC

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24 July 53

CURRENT PROSPECTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE KOREAN TRUCE

Introduction:

(1) In accepting UN assurances, Communists have indicated probable intention to sign truce.

(2) Communists are in good position to exploit any conflict between UN Command and Rhee before or after signing of truce.

(3) Rhee cannot be relied on to cooperate with UN in implementing truce.

Military threat:

(1) Clear threat of major Communist attacks in near future.

(2) May take advantage of US-ROK rupture, or may be planned in any case.

Conciliatory elements in Communist position:

(1) Willing since 19 June to conclude truce if given adequate assurances that UN Command could implement it.

(2) On 19 July accepted UN assurances on major points and stated willingness to discuss preparations for signing truce.

(3) Only one problem to settle before signing - where neutral commission is to take custody of anti-Communist POW's; Communists will probably compromise on this.

(4) "Reserve right" to submit question of released POW's to political conference and to ask implementation of 8 June POW agreement.

Immediate threat to signing of truce:

(1) Rhee may make incendiary public statement that assurances offered Communists do not represent his position and that he will not cooperate.

(2) Rhee lieutenants on 21 July accused US of bad faith and threatened to repudiate Rhee-Robertson agreements and denounce truce.

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(3) In event of ROK intransigence, Communists likely to refuse to sign truce until given stronger assurances on implementation.

Threats to truce immediately after signing:

(1) Communists have been assured that ROK forces will observe cease-fire and withdraw from demilitarized zone, and that safety of neutral nations and Communist personnel required to operate in South Korea is guaranteed.

(2) Rhee may refuse to cease-fire or withdraw, and may refuse permission for Czech and Polish members of supervisory commission to enter South Korea.

Continuing threats to truce:

(1) Most important assurances given Communists were that either side may take "necessary" military action against truce violations, that UN Command will not support ROK forces in violating truce, and that there is no time-limit on truce.

(2) Rhee-Robertson talks did not resolve important differences on these points.

(3) ROK forces may take independent action at any time Rhee does not like progress of events - - for example, at any point in further US-ROK discussions on security pact, joint policies toward political conference, and US support for ROK military operations.

(4) Most critical time is 90 days after political conference begins, as Rhee still intends to resume hostilities at that time if his goals have not been achieved in political conference.

Communist capabilities for exploiting conflict:

(1) Communists decided not to use POW issue to exploit US-ROK conflict. May have decided better prospect was in getting assurances from UN Command on points where substantial difference of view exists.

(2) In good position to exploit whatever conflict may develop, in view of sweet reasonableness at this time, firmness of UN assurances on implementation, and strong Communist military build-up.

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The military build-up:

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[redacted]
[redacted] many indicators of large-scale attacks coming.

(2) Doubtful that Communists have been using truce talks as screen for surprise offensive as truce is about to be signed.

(3) Large-scale attacks, short of general offensive, would be consistent with genuine intention to sign truce.

(4) Some possibility that Communists will seize on incendiary statement by Rhee in next few days as pretext for general offensive, or that they will take such action after signing of truce on pretext of trifling violation.

(5) More likely, however, that Communists will wait for a clear violation of one of major points on which they have got assurances from UN Command, and until they can see what UN Command itself would do about the violation.

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